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SECRETARY PRITCHARD ANNOUNCES SELF HELP AND URBAN SELF HELP GRANTS TOTALING OVER \$14 MILLION

Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) today announced the awarding of \$14,582,985 in grants to over two dozen Massachusetts communities to assist them in acquiring, or protecting, land for recreational use or natural resource (watershed) protection.

"Massachusetts has long recognized that as a smaller-sized state in terms of acreage, we must be unwavering in protecting the limited natural resources we do have," Pritchard said. "These grants demonstrate that when communities are looking to the state for help in preserving recreational land or protecting conservation land, they'll find that we share and support their commitment."

Under the Self-Help Grant Program: 15 grants totaling \$5,038,900 have been awarded to support projects that vary from outright purchases of key parcels, to obtaining conservation restrictions that knit together previously-protected land. The Self-Help program was established in 1961 to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes.

Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources and forest land. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required. This state program pays for the acquisition of land, or a partial interest (such as a conservation restriction).

Under the Urban Self-Help Program: 27 grants totaling \$9,544,085 (encompassing FY'06 and 07) have been awarded to cities and towns to assist in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. The Urban Self Help Program was established in 1977 and any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park/recreation commission and conservation commission is eligible.

Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" project provisions of the program. Only projects that are to be developed for suitable outdoor recreation purposes, whether active or passive in nature, shall be considered for funding. Grants are available for the acquisition of land, and the construction, restoration, or rehabilitation of land for park and outdoor recreation purposes such as swimming pools, zoos, athletic play fields, playgrounds and game courts. Access by the general public is required.

The selection system includes an interagency review and rating of each project, and an evaluation of the applicant community's commitment to sustainable development criteria developed by the Office for Commonwealth Development.

The rating system considers demographic, social, environmental, and project quality factors in order to identify those projects that best protect natural resources in communities that have the greatest need for financial assistance and that have made efforts to implement their open space plans in coordination with local planning for sustainable growth.

Self-Help Grant Recipients (FY 06)

Community	Project Name	Description	Acreage Acquired	Grant Award Amount
Barnstable	Archibald	13 acres adjacent to 2 town-owned conservation areas and a wellfield	13.24	\$ 500,000
Blandford	Knittel	Abuts Cobble Mountain Reservoir, 14000 acres owned by Springfield Water & Sewer Commission.	263	\$ 256,000
Dennis	Welch Property at Crowes Pasture	Conservation area on Quivett Creek shared by Dennis & Brewster. Priority Habitat (Endangered Species) & archaeologically sensitive.	4.47	\$ 243,000
Dunstable	Henry Property	900' on Salmon Brook, part of town's aquifer & stocked by Department of Fish and Game. Within Petapawa Area of Critical Environmental Concern & Core Habitat as identified by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.	26	\$ 371,200
Ipswich	Great Neck Estuary	Permanent protection of ecologically important coastal wetlands & wildlife habitat.	86.04	\$ 500,000
Leominster	Nashua Valley	Parcel is sandwiched between large commercial/retail development and the city's water department land, part of Zone II. Links through water dept land to Sholan Farms.	16.5	\$ 238,000
Marion	White Eagle Conservation Project	Sippican Lands Trust plans to acquire the fee interest and convey a conservation restriction to the town on nearly 250 acres. Includes cranberry bog operation and home to Eastern Box & Spotted Turtles.	248	\$ 105,300

Marshfield	Messer Conservation Land	1200' along North River, a state scenic river, 15-acre salt marsh. Rare species habitat, links to more protected land.	24	\$ 420,000
Newburyport & Newbury	Common Pasture	Joint project between town and city to protect land identified as one of the "Ten Most Endangered Historic Resources" and priority habitat for the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Act.	22	\$ 280,000
Northfield	Brush Mt. Conservation Area	Basalt ridgeline to summit. Includes Metacomet-Monadnock Trail.	46	\$ 70,400
Orleans	Areys Pond (Peck Property)	Pond is a navigable saltwater pond draining into Pleasant Bay - land entirely within this Area of Critical Environmental Concern.	8.2	\$ 500,000
Pembroke	Hill-Gummerus Farm	Property includes 11 cranberry bogs, supporting natural landscape, protects Seabeach Needle Grass & Eastern Box Turtle, abuts Duxbury conservation land.	96.9	\$ 500,000
Southborough	Chestnut Hill Farm	Town plans to purchase conservation restriction and continue agriculture use, along with forestry & wildlife habitat protection.	132	\$ 500,000
Spencer	Green/Burncoat Pond	Town working with Mass Audubon to protect land that lies between town conservation land and Audubon land.	60	\$ 204,000
Wellfleet	Whale Bone Point (Geiger/Fox Island)	Coastal property known as Whale Point, diamondback terrapin habitat, abuts town conservation land, and within Area of Critical Environmental Concern.	4.63	\$ 351,000
Totals:			1,051	\$ 5,038,900

Urban Self Help (FY '06-07)

Community	Project Name	Description	Grant Award Amount
Agawam	School Street/ River Road Park	The first phase of construction includes a softball field, a multi-use field, bocce courts, shuffleboard courts, community gardens, a playground, parking for 214 cars, buffers for abutters, a walkway/bike path, and restroom facilities.	\$500,000

Billerica	Lampson Recreation Complex	The town's major recreational complex will be renovated including: a multi-purpose field, 2 softball fields, 4 basketball courts, 6-8 tennis courts, skateboard area, play structures, a concession and restroom building, parking for 300 cars and other site amenities including: walking trails, paths, two ponds for fishing/nature study, electric and other utilities.	\$500,000
Boston	Quincy Street Play Area	The grant will be used to enlarge the passive area and redesign it to have more street frontage. The new plaza area will include space for a focal point feature to be designed. The basketball court, paths, and walls will also be refurbished.	\$258,750
Boston	Ronan Park	The grant will be used to replace the play space with a new state of the art play structure, the new play area will be accessible to people with disabilities, basketball courts, paths, and walls will be refurbished.	\$301,200
Brookline	Front Landfill Park Development Project	The park design will include Brookline's first regulation size soccer field; pathway connections and signage adjacent conservation areas; meadow area; passive grassed area; play area; ample parking; picnic areas, shade shelter, benches, trash receptacles, and water fountains; walkways; and all stormwater will be managed onsite. This is a former brownfields site.	\$500,000
Chelsea	Installation of Rubber Safety Surfaces	The project will improve and update four existing playgrounds by installing new impact absorbing rubber safety surfaces under play structures.	\$125,800
Chicopee	Ray Ash Memorial Park	The improvements include providing accessibility for people with disabilities to the pool and comfort station, replacing a wooden play structure with new modular equipment, replacing cement skatepark equipment with more state of the art units, upgrade water spray feature, expand parking, improve athletic fields with new irrigation, bleachers, backstops, player benches, and fencing.	\$315,000
Dennis	Bass River Park	The town will purchase a 2.57-acre parcel of commercial land on the banks of Bass River and restore it as a public waterfront park.	\$500,000

Easthampton	Nonotuck Park Restroom and Parking Restoration	A new restroom will be added that will be handicapped accessible. The "Area 3" parking lot will be expanded by adding over 100 parking spaces, but will be designed to allow for recharge of groundwater.	\$209,300
Fall River	Park Improvements: Lafayette/Maplewood	At Lafayette Park, a skate park will be constructed. At Maplewood park, two tennis courts will be resurfaced/fenced.	\$100,000
Fitchburg/Leominster	Twin City Rail Trail	The cities will work together on a joint project to acquire the 4.2 mile abandoned rail corridor to create a new bicycle/pedestrian linear trail park that will link the two cities. (total acreage 34.84)	\$500,000
Lawrence	Arlington Neighborhood Park	The park will offer open lawn area for free play; walking paths; a picnic shelter and grove with a wildflower meadow; children's play equipment; and game tables. The project will add 200 feet of new riverfront access with a boardwalk and signage.	\$339,150
Leominster	Doyle Field, Phase I, Year 2	This phase includes the building of supporting structures, such as a press box, a media box, concession stands, and two rest rooms updated to include access for people with disabilities.	\$500,000
Lynn	New Manning Stadium	A new athletic complex will be constructed on the site of the former Manning Bowl. The facility will hold 4000 seats and have lighting and artificial turf. Parking will be increased to 200 spaces (also supporting Fraser Field events). A concession stand, rest rooms, fountains, and a tot lot will also be built.	\$500,000
Malden	Maplewood Park	The project calls for the phased installation of infilled synthetic turf that will provide a durable and resilient playing surface. This is a former brownfields site.	\$500,000
Malden/Melrose	Pine Banks Park	This joint project calls for the addition of a 90-ft baseball diamond (synthetic surface). A rectangular field will be overlaid in the outfield area, creating an additional soccer field. The Main Street entrance will be relocated and the road realigned. New parking will be added. This is a former brownfields site.	\$500,000

New Bedford	Pierce Mill Park	The active recreation area will be updated to meet current accessibility standards. A water play facility will be installed. The aging play equipment will be replaced with new equipment. A 30-foot diameter gazebo, a full-size lighted basketball court, an infill artificial turf soccer field will all be installed. This is a former brownfields site.	\$500,000
Orange	Riverfront Park	The project will construct a riverfront park. Situated on the Millers River, recreational facilities will be incorporated into the design to include a ramp providing river access for canoes, kayaks, and rafts and a boat/bicycle rental facility. This is a former brownfields site.	\$372,935
Scituate	Scituate Marine Park	The park facilities being renovated/developed include adding 14 boat slips, public gathering area with picnic tables and benches, adding a canoe and kayak launch, construction of a boardwalk and paths, and related environmental education signage, reconstructing the park building, and site improvements including new drainage and parking.	\$498,450
Somerville	Kemp Nut Park	This park is adjacent to a proposed Green Line extension stop, as well as the Minuteman Rail Trail. The park will include tree lined walkways, seating areas, an elevated terrace that will serve as a viewing platform, a reading circle, play structures, and a spray feature. This is a former brownfields site.	\$495,000
Somerville	Allen Street Park & Durrell Park	The parks will be redeveloped to include community gardens, spray area for children, shade structures, and safety lighting.	\$155,100
Springfield	Marshall Roy Park, DeBerry Field, and Tree Top Park Design	Marshall Roy will have its baseball/softball field renovated, athletic fields upgraded, new play units added, new irrigation systems, and landscape improvements completed. Tree Top and DeBerry Parks will undergo Phase I improvements.	\$109,550

Springfield	Kenefick Park	The proposed renovation includes development of the following: ball field renovations, enlarging the water playground area, improvements to the three tennis courts, enlarging the playground area, tree work, and site amenities, such as benches, trash receptacles, and water bubbler.	\$252,000
Springfield	Blunt Park Improvements	The park will be renovated to improve access to the restroom facilities and new backstops, player benches, trash receptacles, and new play equipment will be added.	\$105,000
Springfield	Harriet Tubman Park	The proposed project will upgrade the existing amenities to ensure accessibility for all residents.	\$175,000
West Springfield	Memorial Pool and Bathhouse	The current pool will be rebuilt with new drains and sub-drains and improved accessibility for people with disabilities. The wading pool will be replaced with a zero depth "splash" pad with interactive water features.	\$500,000
Winthrop	Massa Playground	Repairs to the park on a basketball court, two areas with play structures and swings, an informal paved area and some benches, basketball court and walkways.	\$231,850
		TOTALS:	\$9,544,085